

The path of river smoothed pebbles and large flat stones has patches of R. tenuicaulis usually dominating but now static for winter is host to many seedlings. Over the path more R. tenuicaulis, R. hookeri and the lovely and smooth R. australis has a baby hebe growing right in its centre - next R. parkii. The latter two showing their almost undescrible greying white greeny fawn colour of winter.

As July ends, when I look closely, the faintest tinge of green shows and also the flower buds of R. tenuicaulis. The first to scent the air and tell me spring is real.

THE ARNOLD WALL MEMORIAL TREE-CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

B.P.J. Molloy

On Saturday 30th September 1967 the Canterbury Botanical Society, supported by the Christchurch City Council Parks and Reserves Department, held a tree-planting ceremony in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens to honour the memory of Arnold Wall (1869-1966), Professor of English at Canterbury College from 1898 to 1931, whose extra-curricular activities helped to improve our knowledge of the native flora of Canterbury. The Society felt that a totara from Kennedys Bush would be an appropriate memorial tree because the totara is long-living and typical of Canterbury, and also because of Arnold Wall's particular interest in the botany of the Port Hills. A suitable young specimen was duly selected from Kennedy's Bush by the Parks and Reserves Department and planted for the Society by Arnold Wall's grand-daughter, Mattie Wall. Subsequently a stone tablet recording this event was prepared in Takaka marble by Cecil Dunn and set in place by the Society at the foot of the young totara.

For the past 10 years the Arnold Wall memorial totara has grown steadily on the lawn by the steps leading from Beswicks Walk to the New Zealand section lake. To the left of it, and facing the lake, is a male lowland ribbonwood (Plagianthus betulinus), a female kahikatea (Dacrycarpus dacrydioides) which bears fruit with distinctly yellowish as opposed to the normal reddish arils, and a kauri (Agathis australis), while to the right is a large common kowhai (Sophora microphylla) and the Nothofagus lawn.

However, the memorial totara is not the species the Society or the Parks and Reserves Department thought it was. It is neither true totara (Podocarpus totara) nor Hall's totara (P. hallii), both of which occur on the Port Hills and elsewhere in Canterbury. It is in fact the needle-leaved totara (P. acutifolius), a species more at home in Westland and western Nelson, but which crosses the low part of the Main Divide between the Harper and Amuri passes, and is found sparingly in North Canterbury. The easternmost plants I have seen grow in typically riparian fashion alongside Sisters Stream which flows into the north branch of the Hurunui River.

It is clear that the totara selected for the Society's ceremony was planted in Kennedys Bush in the first place, along with others, probably in the early 1950s. Now even its origin seems to be unknown. These points illustrate the confusion that can arise when "foreign" native species are introduced, albeit with good intentions, into reserves of natural vegetation.

Notwithstanding its dubious origin and mistaken identity, the Arnold Wall totara will no doubt continue to flourish. Indeed it could become a management problem if it is not wisely pruned and is allowed to spread and layer normally, like the large specimens in the Cockayne Memorial Garden. At present it is a slender tree with a single leader about 3.5 m tall and 10 cm wide at the base, with typically strong basal branches. The leaves are characteristically narrow (less than 2 mm wide), needle-like and olive green (new growth tends to bronze). Moreover it is a male tree which has flowered quite heavily each year for the last four, usually during the first week of November (P. acutifolius) is dioecious like our other species of totara, that is it bears male and female flowers on different plants).

It is a pity perhaps that the Arnold Wall tree planting falls within the second hundred years of 'the Gardens'. Thus the tree is not listed among the historic and commemorative ones in the book "A Garden Century 1863-1963" published by the Christchurch City Council. Nonetheless it should stand as a permanent memorial to a notable student of the Canterbury flora. In particular it should remind us all that valuable botanical information will continue to be gathered by talented amateurs. Arnold Wall lived a long and productive life - 97 years - and many of his botanical activities were carried out after he had retired from Canterbury College. It is significant that this Society has recognised his contribution. Can we follow his example?

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Mr. L.J. Metcalf and Mrs. Alice Dumbleton for providing some of the background details.

Type locality of Schizeilema pallidum (Kirk) Domin

or

Where is Pukunui Creek, Canterbury?

M.J.A. Simpson

The type locality of Schizeilema pallidum (Kirk) Domin is given as "Pukunui Creek, Canterbury", and the collector, "T. Kirk 19/1/76" (Allan 1961). So far as I am aware Pukunui Creek does not appear on any present day maps, and the name is not mentioned in "Maori Place Names of Canterbury (Beattie 1945).